



# Windmill Hill City Farm Volunteer Newsletter

Issue 11

March 2017

## Goat Facts



Find out more about our floppy eared friends-  
**Back page**



## Britain's Vegetable Crisis- what can we do?



 **FREE FISH!** 

**Turn to page 3 to find out more!**

## UPCOMING EVENTS!

Find out about what you can get involved with over the next couple of months. **Back Page**

## The Future of the Farm

In 2016 we celebrated 40 years since the creation of Windmill Hill City Farm. We reflected on our humble beginnings to a time when a group of local volunteers opposed plans to build a lorry park, winning the right to turn a patch of derelict land into a green oasis for the community. Forty years later, in 2016 we revered at what an amazing place we have become. We have grown to offer a range of activities that involve people from across the city, and are a key provider of educational, recreational and therapeutic facilities and activities for local adults and children alike.

This year, we are looking forward to the future of the Farm. We are developing a 3 year strategy, a vision of the main ambitions and targets for the Farm until 2020. It's fair to say the Farm is thriving and we have an amazing team of volunteers, staff, animals and plant life who are each have a role in making that happen! But amidst growing inequality in society, is there more that we can provide? How do we respond in what we offer as a farm situated in an inner

city area with growing affluence side by side with pockets of disadvantage?

Many opportunities and challenges lie ahead. With lots to think about, we can only do this together.

From its origin, Windmill Hill City Farm was built through volunteer action and we will continue to put volunteer activity and community involvement at the heart of what it does. In light of this, we need your feedback on the proposed strategy.



Copies are available for your to read and you can send comments and any other ideas to Lizzie who will pass them onto the Board of Trustees and Steve. You can also comment on our main ambitions and aspirations which are on the wall in the Volunteer's Building. You are the farm, today and in the future, and your ideas matter- please do get involved!

## In the last few months, volunteers have achieved...

Helping children make 160 pizzas in 4 hours and taking £320- a new record!

Painted 46 ducks for the pond- Project Mallard success!

Shifted tons of muck onto gardens in preparation for growing!

Helped the café move into their first, and then second temporary home!

# Britain's Vegetable Crisis

# Volunteer Meeting Notes

Have you noticed a distinct lack of courgettes on the supermarket shelves? Are you paying more for your aubergine, forking out for your peppers? An unusually wet and cold winter in Spain has led to a vegetable shortage in the UK, dubbed 'Britain's vegetable crisis'. Courgettes, salad leaves, peppers, and aubergines are all in short supply. Iceberg lettuce and broccoli are being rationed by nation's biggest supermarkets, causing a black market to spring up, with a box of lettuces advertised on ebay for £50! With this rationing, is it time to wake up and think about who we rely on for food, and what we actually need?

What this crisis highlights is both our excessive dependency on crops from EU countries, and our expectation of being able to eat whatever we want at any time of the year. In winter, 80% of certain vegetables come from a single region of Spain: Murcia. When weather threatens growing here, we are in trouble! We buy from other countries too, but a recent report by University of Leeds and Morrisons found that overall only 23% of the fruit and vegetables eaten in Britain are produced here. In 2017, we are flying CO2 emitting planes full of lettuces round the world so that we can eat salad in winter. The rationale behind our food production and consumption system begins to seem absurd.

This shortage is a reminder of how much we take food for granted in our society, and could be a time to reconsider what we do as individuals to improve the system.



One action could be growing food locally, which we do well here at the farm. The new café will have a farm shop to sell the produce that you gardening volunteers are growing over the next few months- well done you lot! Others seem to have the same idea, with online volume sales of Wilko's seeds and bulbs jumping by 272% on the week that the veg crisis news came out, compared to the same period last year, suggesting that shoppers are thinking about growing their own supplies.

We have power as consumers, so can also buy UK produce from supermarkets for cheaper than our jet setting lettuce- during the winter months UK farmers produce beetroot, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celeriac, chicory, fennel, Jerusalem artichokes, kale, leeks, parsnips, potatoes, red cabbage, swede and turnips. Of course we are all going to eat the produce we find delicious from time to time, but with the shortage expected to last until April, let's do what we can and look forward to eating that tasty British lettuce to our heart's content from May until October!



## Building Developments

Building work on the café began on January 30<sup>th</sup> and is due to finish on May 12<sup>th</sup>, weather permitting. The café are residing in the interaction centre until May. Planning is underway for the interaction centre design. Julie is leading on this so talk to her if you have ideas. The workshop space is complete. It needs tidying and organising. The Garden Workroom structure is up; the next phase will be putting in a concrete floor, sink, work surfaces etc. We will use some of the equipment from the temporary café when they move in May. See displays of the interaction centre and garden work room on Volunteer Building wall from 16th March to comment on ideas.

## Activity Centre

The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA) will rent the Activity Centre from March 1<sup>st</sup> on an ongoing basis.

## Funding

We have 'Awards for All' funding for summer family and children's cooking activities. We are waiting to hear back from Bristol Impact Fund- a local authority grant. We should know for definite by March.

## Animals

The birds were let out on February 28th in line with Defra's guidance on bird flu. We have 14 piglets (13 at time of release - unfortunately one passed away from pneumonia) who are now a few weeks old. We have 8 goat kids (5 at the time of release). Lambs will be born in March.

## Volunteer suggestions/questions/ideas

- Elizabeth is resigning from her position as wheelbarrow monitor to dedicate volunteering hours to food production. She also pleaded for everyone to not overload the wheelbarrows and look after them. We discussed the possibility of solid wheels, which we'll look into.
- There was a request from our dedicated compost turners to only fill the bays that need filling, and one manure bay at a time. Please look out for signs about which bay to add to. If you don't know, ask Sam or Clare. When big animals are mucked out there are sometimes a couple being filled, so do ask to be clear.
- There was a question about the lack of volunteers being involved in the interaction centre development when originally it had been suggested it would be a volunteer led project. The response was that we had to get contractors and staff in to do the job quickly because of the café needing to move into the area sooner than expected when NACAO got lease of the Activity Centre. Apologies of any disappointment but we had to move fast. Volunteers can contribute to ideas for what will be in the interaction centre once the café move out and the garden workroom- talk to Julie and Susan.

**Thanks to all who attended the meetings will be on April 18th and 19th at 12noon.**

## Staff Profile

**Name:** Laura Carey  
**Age:** 38

**From:** Bristol

**Favourite animal:** Otters

**Random fact:** I once sprained my ankle by falling over when doing the MC Hammer dance!

**What do you do at WHCF?**

I am Deputy Manager of Children and Family Services.

**How long have you been working at Windmill Hill City Farm?**

5 and a half years!

**What's the best thing about working here?**

I work with a really lovely bunch of people- staff and volunteers. Also having the privilege of seeing piglets and goats being born!

**What changes have you seen since being here?**

So many! The Farm has developed into a beautiful and thriving space.

**What are your hopes for the future?**

To be able to overtake Farmer Tim on the cycle path!



## Volunteer Profile

**Name:** Mair      **Age:** 34

**From:** Deepest darkest Wales. Now living in Bristol.

**Favourite animal:** Sheep

**Random fact:** I used to be a professional archaeologist. I'm also very shy!

**What do you do at WHCF?**

I volunteer at the farm on Tuesdays, with the gardening group in the morning and the animal care group in the afternoon. I help to support other volunteers to complete tasks and get the most out of our time on the farm.

**How long have you been working/volunteering at Windmill Hill City Farm?**

I have been volunteering at WHCF since November 2015. I started out doing afternoons with the animal group before being lucky enough to find a spot in the morning gardening group as well.

**What do you like about working/volunteering here? What's the best thing about working here?**

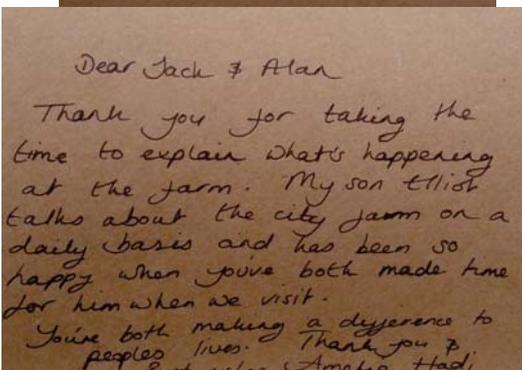
I love volunteering at the farm. I enjoy meeting people and listening to their stories. I find the staff and the volunteers here very supportive. It is a place I can be myself, help people, and in turn, be helped by them. I think as a group we support each other and that is what makes this place so important to so many of us.

**What changes have you seen since being here?**

It's hard not to just talk about all the exciting building work going on all around us at the moment, the expansion of the cafe is hard to miss! It would be easy to list the evolving physical features of WHCF, but out of all the development that the farm experiences I think what strikes me most is the positive changes I see in those who volunteer here, including myself. The gains made by people never fail to amaze me and that really gets my attention.

**What are your hopes for the future and dreams in life?**

Complicated question! I would like to get really good at surfing! I definitely daydream of having outside space for growing food, maybe an acre or two for a few sheep as well. Eventually I would like to work full time in a horticultural setting supporting people to identify and realise their potential.



Alan volunteers on Saturdays with Jack from Site Operations (as well as gardening other days) mucking out the animals and talking to curious visitors. The message above was sent from a visitor all the way from London who had such a good time that she came back again with her boy. As you'll see, she was so happy with the time and effort that Alan and Jack gave to make them feel welcome...

**THANK YOU** for being such a good representative of the farm Alan!

👉👉 **Free fish!!!** 👈👈

The time has come to say goodbye to the fish in the Volunteer's Building. We are doing a huge spring clean of the building and they need a new home. We thank them for everything that they have done for us. They are looking for a new home. If you would like to adopt the fish you will get:

- \* 3 fish    \*1 fish tank    \* 1 filter    \*1 thermometer
- \* 1 tub of fish food    \*Endless fish joy

**Talk to Lizzie if you want the fish- first come first served!**

👉👉      👉👉      👉👉      👉👉

## Upcoming Events

### Corporate Volunteering- Foot Anstey Monday 20th March

5 volunteers from a local law firm will be helping out on the farm.

### Corporate Volunteering– EDF Thursday 6th April

10 volunteers from the national energy company will be building fences around the animal paddocks.

### Confidence for work and interview preparation workshops

April 4th and 25th

The WEA are running a workshop on confidence in getting back to work and interview preparation. It will run from 10-1.30pm and include a free lunch. Choose one date to attend and contact Lizzie to RSVP.

### Volunteer Meetings April 18th and 19th

@ 12 in Volunteer Building

### Wild Outdoors Day May 13th

Fun spring event for all– event steward volunteers needed.

*For more information on these opportunities, talk to Lizzie.*

## Goat Facts

We are very lucky to have 8 beautiful new goat kids here on the farm. Here are some facts about them:

-  Goats were one of the first animals to be tamed by humans around 9,000 years ago.
-  Goat meat is the most consumed meat per capita worldwide
-  Goats can be taught their name and to come when called.
-  Goats have a gestation period (pregnancy) of five months.
-  Mothers recognise each kid by a unique call and scent.
-  Goats have an efficient four-chambered stomach that allows them to survive on sparse vegetation.
-  Coffee was first discovered when goat herders noticed the goats acting very energetic after nibbling on the coffee beans.
-  Goats reach sexual maturity at 4 – 18 months.
-  Goats have an efficient four-chambered stomach which that allows them to survive on sparse vegetation and eat quickly to reduce foraging time during which they are exposed to predators.
-  Before coins were used for money, goats were traded for silver, because they were so valuable.

### LOCKER KEY AMNESTY!



We are running low on locker keys. They are expensive to replace so please check your pockets and bags and return them if you find one! Please remember to hand them back at the end of your day.



## Feedback, issues and questions...

If you need to talk to someone about volunteering, please talk to Lizzie, Nicky or Sam:



LIZZIE  
SPENCER

Volunteer  
Manager

0117  
947 1181



NICKY  
BACON

Health and  
Social Care  
Manager

0117  
9471188



SAM  
LLOYD-  
SMITH

Health and  
Social Care  
Operations  
Manager

0117 9471188